Art Chats

Joslyn Art Museum

Mickalene Thomas (American, b. 1971), *Din, une très belle nègresse* I, 2012, acrylic, oil, enamel, and mixed media on wood panel, 102 x 84 in. (259.1 x 213.4 cm), Museum purchase, gift of The Sherwood Foundation, 2019.6 © 2020 Mickalene Thomas / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**About the Artist:**
Brooklyn-based artist Mickalene Thomas entered the residency program at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2002, where she developed her now iconic depictions of strong, confident African American women decorated with collages and rhinestones. Her portraits feature glamorous subjects who embrace their gender and skin color, projecting a vision of black femininity and power. She describes Din, as a shy medical student who transforms “like a chameleon” when she models, becoming self-assured and bold.

**People Who Pose**

**Look:**
Up close, personal, and powerful—that’s the artist’s plan! Spend time enjoying all the shimmering details of this portrait.

How do the vibrant colors and lively patterns express the attitude and personality of the sitter?

What is she thinking?

**Discuss:**
Imagine a story between the sitter and the artist. Do they know and respect each other?

What do you wonder about this portrait?

If you were asked to make a portrait of your friend, what would it look like? What colors, patterns, and objects would you include to capture their personality?

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!